

Il vetro in Italia centrale dall'Antichità al Contemporaneo Atti delle XVII Giornate Nazionali di Studio sul Vetro (Massa Martana e Perugia, 11–12 maggio 2013), eds. Luciana Mandruzzato, Teresa Medici, Marina Uboldi, Cremona 2015, pp. 218

The book was recently presented on the occasion of the XVIII Giornate Nazionali di Studio sul Vetro (Pavia, 16–17 May 2015) by Luciana Mandruzzato, vice-president of the Italian committee of AIHV (Association internationale pour l'histoire du verre). It represents the Conference proceedings of the previous, the 17th, national meeting organized by the same committee in Massa Martana and Perugia, on 11 and 12 May 2013. The conference was supported by the Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, Soprintendenza per i beni archeologici dell'Umbria. Aims of the congress were to draw attention to central Italy, area often neglected in the literature, and to consider a wide period, from antiquity to contemporary times.

The conference was successful and gathered a copious and heterogeneous group of Italian scholars working on a great variety of subjects. Eleven oral presentations were accordingly concerned with glass in central Italy, seven others with glass subjects. Eleven posters were on display: three about glass in central Italy, three updating the Corpus on Italian glass stamps, five on other issues. Unfortunately not all the participants provided a written paper for the proceedings. The congress was enriched with the interview of the contemporary glass artist Giuliano Giuman and with the presentation of three books edited by the Italian Committee of AIHV (the Congress Proceedings of Trento, 2010, and Calabria, 2011, and the 5th volume of the Corpus on post classical glass Collections in Veneto).

Twenty four papers published in the volume (all of them written in Italian) are various, concerning both chronology and methodological approach. Ten contributions are pertinent to the congress theme; eleven to other research topics; three are an update of the Corpus of glass stamps in Italy.

The attempt to fully evaluate every single contribution was challenging on account of the wide variety of the investigated themes, referring also to the branch of art history. Therefore, I dedicated more attention to

some of them, either because they are close to my personal academic interests or because of the novelty of their topic and methodological approach.

The volume opens with the presentation of the Committee's president Maria Grazia Diani and the former president Giuseppina Malfatti, the welcome remarks, and the introduction of the Soprintendente per i Beni Archeologici dell'Umbria, Mario Pagano.

Carlo Ridolfi completed the introductory section offering the geographic and archaeological setting for the "monti Martani" area, where the Congress took place (*Il Castelliere di Monte Cerchio a Massa Martana*, pp. 13–17).

The contributions on glass in central Italy follow approximately a chronological order. Starting from the Hellenistic period, the outstanding findings from the necropolis of Todi were presented by Dorica Manconi. Nine tombs, dating from the late 3rd century to the early 2nd century BCE, were excavated in 2007. They brought a great profusion of glassware: hemispherical bowls, dishes and plates, both in monochrome and mosaic glass. These types are generally attributed to the eastern Mediterranean production. The grave goods are thoroughly illustrated, although the resolution of the pictures could be higher. The important comparison with other relevant and relatively near contexts, such as the Hellenistic necropolis of Ancona and Etruria, could be examined more deeply (*I vetri ellenistici della necropoli di Todi [PG], via Orvietana*, pp. 19–31).

The following papers concern the Roman period and Late Antiquity. Elisa Rubegni examined the problematic context of Pieve di Pava (San Giovanni d'Asso, Siena), occupied from pre-Roman time, with a climax in the late 5th century, as a paleo-Christian church, and abandoned in the 12th century. The site offers a wide range of glass materials. The willingness of the Author to publish also not completely understood specimens in order to provide a useful comparison for other contexts, furnishing remarkable graphic and photographic records, is noteworthy (*I reperti vitrei della Pieve di Pava: problematiche ed osservazioni*, pp. 33–46).

Also related to Late Antiquity, Diego Blanco explained some structures excavated near Rome and interpreted as workshop of glass sectilia. During the archaeological surveys on Colle Oliva (Ciampino) a thermal building was discovered, perhaps related to a villa of Imperial Age. The archaeological context, exhaustively presented, yielded several ovens and an underground channel system connecting them. This is interpreted as a device to keep warm the annealing ovens with hot air coming from the principal working oven. The Author believes it was a specialized glass manufacture for opus sectile decorations, active between the 4th and the 5th century. Although there could remain some doubts about this attribution

and comparable workshops are apparently not documented, the paper (undoubtedly well-structured and comprehensive also in the photographic documentation) has the merit of showing an impressive and rare productive context (*Ipotesi di un'officina vetraria di sectilia a Colle Oliva [Ciampino]*, pp. 47–59).

Valentino Nizzo, Cristina Draghici and Lisa Volpe presented glass materials from the excavations (2011–2012) of a Roman villa near Bologna. It was occupied from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd CE, with a second phase dating to the 4th–5th century. The glasses, mostly blown tableware and containers, and belonging to the first phase, were analysed with non-destructive methods (XRF, SEM, optical microscopy). The analyses revealed an uncommon potash composition, not corresponding to the soda-lime glass, prevalent in Roman age. Although the state of the research is still preliminary, the willingness to present results that could prove the use of alternative glass recipes in Roman time is noteworthy (*Ricerche preliminari sui vetri rinvenuti nello scavo dell'insediamento rustico romano di Ca' de' Fabbri, Minerbio [BO]*, pp. 61–69).

Angelo Montenero, Giovanni Visco, Paola Baldassarri, Sara Capretti and Cinzia Petrini presented the results of archaeometrical characterisation of glass material from the “Piccole Terme”, private baths of a rich domus, dated from the 2nd to the 4th century (excavations 2005–2011). Different techniques (stereomicroscopy, colorimetric analysis, SEM-EDS, UV-VIS spectrometry, XRD, thermogravimetric analysis and density measurement) were employed in order to recognize composition (Natron glass), characteristics and deterioration of thirteen samples found in the tepidarium. Many fragments, with residue of plaster, belong to thin glass plaques, probably part of a ceiling decoration. Other findings (waste glass, coals and raw glass) from a dump, dated to the 6th century, were interpreted as evidence of a later glass-working (*Caratterizzazione di vetri archeologici provenienti dal sito delle Piccole Terme di Palazzo Valentini a Roma*, pp. 71–76).

The sequence of papers skips the Middle Ages and reaches Renaissance. Chiara Guarnieri showed the material found in the Estense Palace, destroyed due to complete renovation in 1479. The closed context of a domestic pit, gave also many glass fragments, mostly tableware, some lamps and window panes (*Materiali vitrei dal Palazzo Estense di Ferrara*, pp. 77–84).

Cristina Tonini published for the first time six reliquaries (all documented by good pictures), dated between the 16th and the 17th century. Two of them are cold painted, gilded and diamond point engraved, probably a Venetian production (*Reliquiari del convento di San Damiano, Assisi*, pp. 85–89).

Contribution of Silvia Ciappi was integrated with the same section of the book. It consists of particular iconographical study on still lifes, depicting glass objects, made by artists working at the Medici court. The practical functions, shapes and typologies of the glasses are therefore testified, providing also clues on the geographical origin of the artists. The analysis goes beyond a mere artistic approach, shedding light on the role of the Florentine glass production. It also allows to recognize how the court artists of that period were well-informed on optics and physics of the liquids, on refraction and deformation effects (*Il vetro a Firenze nel XV e XVI secolo: tra arte e scienza*, pp. 91–98).

Paolo Zecchin offers an unusual methodological approach analysing the archive documentation of the State Inquisitors in Venice about glass-makers from Murano expatriates in Rome in the second half of the 17th century. The imitation of Muranese glassware abroad (“façon de Venise”) testified to the end of the Muranese gold age, although the monopoly in the production of glass sheets for mirrors was still maintained by Murano (*Vetrai muranesi a Roma nel Seicento*, pp. 99–106).

The last contribution on glass in central Italy focuses on a successful project of industrial archaeology. Chiara Berichillo and Paolo Bracciali presented the glass museum founded in Piegara, a small medieval village in Umbria, active in glass production since the 14th century. The museum situated in an old glass factory used until the 1960s, recently restored, respecting the historical characteristics of the building (*La produzione storica del vetro a Piegara e i resti dell'antico edificio industriale*, pp. 107–113).

The second part of the volume includes various updates on other research topics, concerning different areas through entire Italy and also Jerusalem.

Annamaria Larese published some new glass findings from the province of Belluno, area that generally produced very little ancient glass. The presented items were found in graves, mostly dated between the 1st and the 2nd century (unguentaria), with a later specimen (goblet) dating to the 7th century (*Nuovi reperti vitrei dal Bellunese*, pp. 115–118).

A catalogue on the bird-shaped unguentaria (Isings 11) from the province of Pavia is offered by Maria Grazia Diani and Rosanina Invernizzi. The aim is to complete the map of the geographical distribution and to supply a partial catalogue for this shape (*Studio tipologico e carta di distribuzione dei balsamari a forma di colomba [Isings 11] nel territorio dell'attuale provincia di Pavia*, pp. 119–126).

Extraordinary findings from the excavation of a septic tank in the “Insula Orientalis II” in Herculaneum are presented by Domenico Camar-

do and Angelo Esposito. The pit furnishes an optimal closed context as it was perfectly sealed by pyroclastic material and had no drain to the sea. It was therefore necessary to empty it periodically. Beside the huge amount of organic material recovered, 170 crates of various findings (mostly ceramic), fallen or thrown into the pit, were collected. The advantages of recovering materials from the dump are firstly the restricted chronology of the materials, in this case with a certain *terminus ante quem*, and secondly the good state of conservation as they were thrown in the sewer immediately after being broken; consequently, they remained almost complete and most of the fragments were preserved. The glass findings correspond to shapes commonly attested in Flavian contexts, but there are also types not documented so far. The specimens belong mostly to tableware and cosmetics containers, confirming the widespread use of perfumes and ointments in the 1st century CE. Also gaming counters and beads were found. Considering the large amount of materials, the care for the photographic reproduction is noteworthy. The analysis offers a significant overview of typology and quantitative amount of glass circulating during the years immediately before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (79 CE) in the city of Herculaneum, which lacks publications on glass materials (*I reperti in vetro dallo scavo della fossa settica dell'Insula Orientalis II di Ercolano*, pp. 127–138).

Still with regard to the Roman city of Herculaneum, the Authors of the previous paper (Domenico Camardo and Angelo Esposito), supported by Maria Paola Guidobaldi and Mario Notomista, analysed the presence of window panes in several buildings in Herculaneum. Drain works on the ancient beach (Herculaneum Conservation Project, 2009) led to the discovery of a perfectly preserved wooden roof, belonging to the Hall of the marbles of the “Casa del rilievo di Telefo”. Below the roof and the ceiling several fragments of glass plates were found. They belonged to a French door that opened onto a balcony. The first results of this investigation were presented in a poster aiming to demonstrate the presence of window panes in several public and private buildings as well as in the suburban “Villa dei Papiri”, and to understand the different characteristics related to public or private use (*La presenza di vetri alle finestre di edifici pubblici e privati nell'antica Ercolano*, pp. 139–143).

Lucina Vattuone explained the technological and iconographic transformation that occurred in gold-glasses contextually with the reforms of Constantine the Great. The Author found an interesting correspondence between the introduction of a new technique and of a new style in the gold-leaf decoration and a metamorphosis of the ideological content. She asserts that this transformation was expressly desired as part of a widespread organized campaign that aimed to combine the old values of the

Empire and the new Christian message. Recognizing the historical moment of this transformation offers a new approach for the understanding of the iconographic and epigraphic repertoires, the location of the workshops, and the definition of the chronology (*La straordinaria metamorfosi dei vetri dorati in epoca costantiniana*, pp. 145–154).

Giuseppe Schiavariello and Enrica Zambetta published two long-neck glass bottles probably from a grave in Egypt, collected by the Franciscan friar Godfrey Kloetzli (lived in Israel during the second half of 1900). The objects are now preserved in the Archaeological Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem. They present traces of straw covering and are interpreted as bottles or unguentaria. The probable chronologies are mid-1st to the 2nd century and 2nd to the 4th century (*Due bottigliette/balsamari con tracce di impagliatura dal Museo Archeologico Privato dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum di Gerusalemme*, pp. 153–156).

Glass materials from Padua found in the area near the Cathedral (ancient “Chiostro dei Canonici”) were presented by Alessandra Marcante. The excavations, conducted by the University of Padua, revealed a stratigraphy from the 4th century to Renaissance. Many glass fragments belong to the beginning of the 7th century, a phase characterized by a destructive fire (*Materiale vitreo dallo scavo del “Chiostro dei Canonici” presso il Duomo di Padova. Relazione preliminare*, pp. 157–161).

Marco Verità and Sandro Zecchin presented a particular and noteworthy study based on archival research and chemical analysis. The aim is to shed light on blue glass recipes, considering various hues from deep cobalt blue to copper turquoise. Blue and aquamarine glass were particularly appreciated both for the production of vessels and other applications, such as enamel and mosaic tesserae. The Authors combined the analysis of six manuscripts compiled by Venetian glassmakers, containing numerous recipes (more than 160), with chemical characterizations. This led to identifying the type of glass and coloring elements used in that period and to disclosing some secrets concerning this production (*Tecnologia vetraria veneziana: i segreti del colore blu nei ricettari rinascimentali*, pp. 163–170).

Glass findings from the Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria del Tempio (Lecce) were displayed by Patricia Caprino and Simona Catacchio. The materials found in a dump, predominantly dating back to the 15th century, consist mostly of tableware and a small amount of urinals, ampoules and vials. The presence of this kind of objects and their association with pharmaceutical pottery allows to assume the practice of medicine or pharmacy in the convent (*Il Convento Francescano di S. Maria del Tempio [LE]: suppellettile vitrea da spezieria e per la pratica medica tra XV e XVI secolo*, pp. 171–175).

Maria Giuseppina Malfatti analyzed the iconography of the convex mirror represented by Flemish painters in the 15th century. A brief history of mirrors, with particular attention to the convex ones manufactured in northern Europe, led to an interesting analysis on their symbolism (*Lo specchio convesso nella pittura fiamminga: simbolismo, magia, scienza e arte fra realtà e trascendenza*, pp. 177–187).

Marina Uboldi reconstructed the history of the glass factory established in Varenna (Fiumelatte) by Bernardo Venini. The factory remained active for longer than half-century and some branches were opened in northern Italy (*La vetreria Venini di Varenna [Lago di Como]. Storia di una industria ottocentesca dimenticata*, pp. 189–197).

The third part of the proceeding consists of three updates of the Corpus of glass stamps in Italy. Miriam Romagnolo presented a fragment of a base (bottle Isings 50) from the ancient vicus of Bedriacum (Cremona). The Author suggested some interpretations of the stamp, on the base of the sole letters preserved: A (or V) and S (*Un vetro con bollo da Calvatone-Bedriacum [CR]*, pp. 199–202).

Two exceptional examples of the Strada Collection (Scaldasole) were presented by Maria Grazia Diani and Rosanina Invernizzi, offering an addition to the glass stamps corpus for the territory of the province of Pavia (*La bottiglia con scena gladiatoria e la coppa di Aristeeas dalla Raccolta Archeologica "Antonio Strada" di Scaldasole [Pavia]*, pp. 203–208).

In the last contribution, Elisabetta Roffia reconsidered some unguentaria with Patrimoni stamps found in Verona (Porta Palio necropolis). Thanks to new findings and historical studies about the Imperial properties and production of aromatic substances in Cispadane Gaul, the Author offered a new approach to this subject (*Note sui balsamari con bollo del gruppo patrimoni di produzione ravennate*, pp. 209–217).

As a whole, the book represents a significant outcome, offering new data and a general enrichment of the current state of knowledge. Noteworthy is also the work of the Editors, Luciana Mandruzzato, Teresa Medici and Marina Uboldi, who within two years after the conference were able to publish a volume of a good quality, recommended for a miscellaneous update on glass in central Italy, from antiquity to contemporary times.

Giulia Cesarin
(Universität zu Köln, Università degli Studi di Padova)